

OFFICE OF THE JOURNAL,

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My Dear Garrison,

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We are destined, it would seem, to be an astonishment to each other; for certainly you cannot be more surprised at anything I have done than I am by your letter just received. I did not even imagine that my article ^{of last week} in reply to a passage from your published letter, would annoy you. Nor can I understand why our recent private correspondence should be regarded by ^{you} as precluding ~~by~~ the publication by me of such an article, or as making it in any sense an indecorum to yourself. Your letter is public property, and I do not perceive why you should complain of any fair allusion to it, or to any part of it, in the Journal. It was far from my purpose to put you to the alternative of either replying to my criticism or seeming to admit its force. I cannot imagine that any sensible

person would for a moment regard your
silence as an admission in your part of
the soundness of my argument. The passage
on which I commented fell under my
observation in one of my exchanges, and
my comments ran off my pen as water
runs from a spout. There was no
premeditation in the case, no conscious
violation of any obligation of courtesy,
and no "disposition to take advantage
of" your "avowed wish and purpose to
enter into no controversy with" ~~you~~^{me}. As
I stated distinctly, that I found the
passage on which I commented floating
about in the newspapers, I am at a
loss to understand what you mean
by saying that I wrote "as though" you
"had personally arraigned" me "in" my
"own columns." Surely it appeared on the
very face of the article that you had
done nothing of the sort, and every reader
of the Journal knows you have not.
You do me very great injustice in say-
ing that my article "savours of an am-
bitious attempt to show how ready" I

am "to break a lance with an old friend
and coöworker." I have no such ambi-
tion, and no such thought ever entered my
head. I should be very sorry to have a
public controversy with you, and sor-
rier still to suppose that I ^{cannot} ~~could~~ ~~not~~
exercise the right to comment with
courteous fairness upon any part of your
letter without subjecting myself to the
imputation of wishing to "break a lance" with
you. Were not my ^{comments} ~~words~~ respectful,
courteous, pertinent? Did they in any
particular~~ly~~ misrepresent you? Was
the passage from your letter so torn
from the context as in the slightest
degree to change its meaning? Nay,
more, did you not, in publishing your
letter, challenge fair comment upon it
from any quarter? I am sorry you
should allow yourself to say that my
article "looks as if" I "were anything
but easy in the position which" I am
"trying so strenuously to maintain." I beg
you to consider ^{whether} ~~if~~ you would have
regarded such a remark from me,

applied to yourself, as compatible with
the courtesy due to an old friend and
co-adjutor. If, for instance, I should
say that your sensitiveness to my crit-
icism indicated an uneasy frame of
mind ^{on your part} in regard to your position, would
you ^{not} think me more insulting than re-
spectful? Your remark leads me to say
that never in all my life was I more
thoroughly convinced of the soundness of
any position than I am now in regard
to this matter of the President's Southern
policy. My mind knows no wavering,
and not even the shadow of a doubt.

You speak of my "vehement in-
vectives against Gen. Grant, his
'shot-gun policy,' etc. Now I never used
the words "shot-gun policy" as applica-
ble to Gen. Grant. That phrase is ^{de-}~~the~~
~~correct~~ descriptive of the conduct of
the Southern Democracy toward the
negroes. It is applicable to Butler
at New Orleans, to the Ku-Klux Klans
and the "lynch-doctors." I have spoken
of Grant's Southern policy as "the bay-

"best policy," which is altogether a
 different thing, ^{the adjective being} ~~and~~ accurately de-
 scriptive. Nor have I ever applied
 any but very moderate condemnatory
~~epithets~~ ^{aspects} to Gen. Grant, of whose
 integrity and good intentions I have
 no doubt. He was misled through
 his civil inexperience, which com-
 pelled him to rely upon the advice
 of others; and in some cases he
 was very unfortunate in the
 choice of his advisers. For what
 I call "Grantism," for want of a
 better name, I hold him far
 less responsible than I do those
 who misled him by humoring
 his prejudices and bearing in-
 cense under his nose.

It is undoubtedly true, and
 I do not in the least shrink from
 admitting it, that ~~the~~ Rebel does
 commend the President's policy.
 So far I think Rebeldom is right,
 irrespective of any question of

any question of motives. But
I shall adhere to what I think
is right, even though the Devil
himself, for his own purposes,
chooses to shout Amen.

But, after all, my dear
Garrison, I am sincerely sorry
~~that~~ I printed my article of
last week, since it annoyed
you. If I had dreamed that
I should give you pain, or put
you under any embarrassment,
I should unhesitatingly have
suppressed it.

Yours, in jumping haste,
but with the old love,

Oliver Johnson.